

ZOOLOGY DEPARTMENT,
CALCUTTA UNIVERSITY,
CALCUTTA-700 019,
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ANAND MUKHOPADHYAY

REFERENCE

- MUKHERJEE, A. K. (1975): Food-habits of Water-birds of the Sundarban, 24-Parganas District, West Bengal, India. *J. Bombay nat. Hist. Soc.* 71: 188-191.

9. THE NESTING OF THE COOT (*FULICA ATRA*) IN THE VILLAGE POND OF KHANDALA

Lavkumar Khachar's note, in the *Journal* vol. 74: 525, recording several Coots (*Fulica atra*) nesting near Nasik, reminds me that last month (December 1978) Fr. J. Hernandez of our Institute reported a pair nesting in the village pond along the roadside at Khandala (Poona). There are earlier records of Coots nesting near Poona, where Major Betham (*JBNHS* 14 p. 176) found it breeding between 14th July and 17th August 1901. He specifically refers to this being the first occasion on which he found the species nesting, in India. Some of these eggs are in the BNHS collection which, contains another obtained at Pashan, near Poona, on 29th August 1920 by F. Ludlow.

Sálim Ali and Humayun Abdulali in "The Birds of Bombay and Salsette" (1939) said that there were no nesting records from Bombay, but I later discovered in the St. Xavier

High School collection, an egg taken at Mahalaxmi, Bombay in 1910. It would appear that the nesting of this species in peninsular India is sporadic.

Incidentally, *INDIAN HANDBOOK* (2:181) refers to Whistler's statement (Pg. 263, The Avifaunal Survey of Ceylon - 1944).

"It has now established in Ceylon" (Giant's Tank, near Marungam), but adds on page 183. "It has not yet been recorded nesting in Ceylon". It may be worthwhile drawing attention to a note by A. E. Butler in *Ceylon Bird Club notes*—December 1962, where he refers to a young Coot brought to him on 5th December in brownish-black plumage, with the shield undeveloped, and the bill pinkish in colour. There would appear to be no doubt that Whistler meant that he had nesting records for Ceylon (Sri Lanka).

ST. XAVIER'S HIGH SCHOOL,
BOMBAY-400 001,
February 6, 1979.

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